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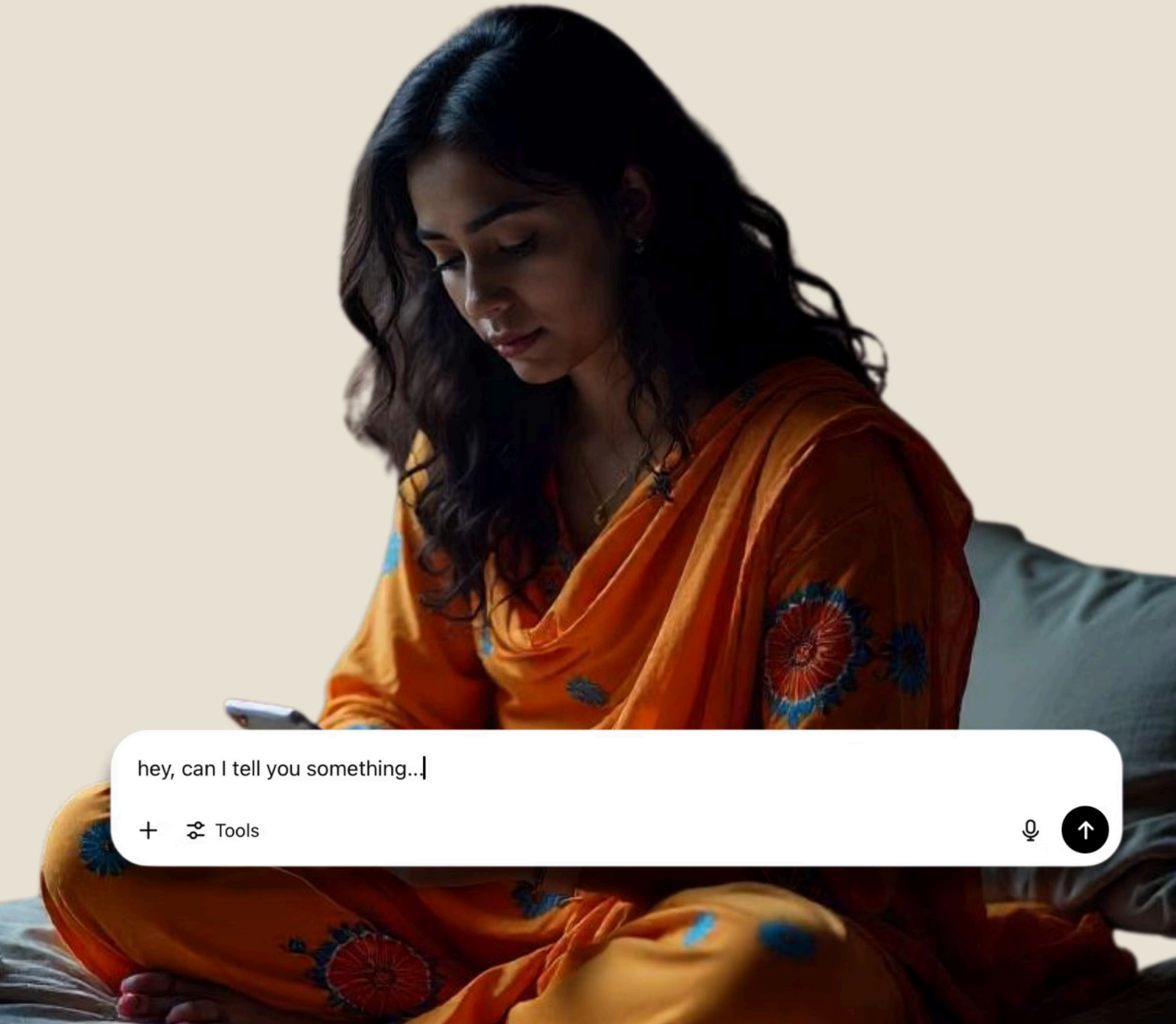
Are you there, AI?

A Youth Ki Awaaz and YLAC study



Are you there, AI?

PUBLISHED BY

YOUTH KI AWAAZ

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India's youth shape culture, power change, and challenge outdated norms , yet their voices rarely reach the spaces where decisions are made. Youth Pulse, a joint initiative of Youth Ki Awaaz (YKA) and Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC) is a recurring, anonymous survey capturing their views, experiences, and aspirations, turning them into timely insights for institutions shaping the country's future.

The first edition, Are You There, AI?, offers a rare, ground-level view of how young Indians are engaging with artificial intelligence: embracing its potential to save time, expand access, and spark ideas, while grappling with its biases, privacy risks, and influence over careers and relationships. Together, these findings capture a generation negotiating the promises and trade-offs of living with AI in a fast-changing, post-pandemic world.

August 2025

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Data Highlights

57% of young Indians use AI emotionally. More than half of respondents have used AI for emotional support — talking to it when stressed, lonely, or needing advice.

ChatGPT is the most popular AI tool for emotional use, far ahead of others like Gemini or Character.AI.

52% of young women share personal thoughts with AI double that of young men. AI use for emotional support is far higher among girls and women, especially for sharing thoughts they wouldn't tell others.

88% of school students turn to AI during stress or anxiety. Teenagers (especially 13–18) show the highest emotional reliance on AI, often treating it as a confidant.

43% of small-town youth share personal thoughts with AI. Young people in small cities and towns report the highest emotional engagement with AI, more than their metro counterparts.

Half (50%) of users value AI's advice; 48% like that it doesn't judge. Young Indians turn to AI for its non-judgmental nature, practical advice, and constant availability (42%).

Late-night talks: 49% use AI in the daytime, 43% in the evening but many after hours. AI becomes the late-night fallback when human support is less accessible.

40% often tell AI things they'd never share with people. AI is becoming a private emotional outlet, handling thoughts too risky for friends or family.

42% say they're less likely to talk to friends or family after using AI. A concerning trend: emotional use of AI may be replacing — not complementing — human support for some.

67% of AI users worry about social isolation; 58% fear privacy risks. Even as they use it, young Indians remain wary of AI's potential to increase isolation or misuse their personal data.

1. Context: AI and Emotions of Indian Youth

AI is no longer just about machines crunching numbers or running factory production processes. How people feel, connect, and make sense of the world around them is increasingly being shaped by this technology in real time. A large section of young people in India has grown up surrounded by the world of apps they use every day, and the line between human and machine interaction has only gotten thinner with the coming of generative AI. With the role of traditional institutions **reducing**, generative AI *companions* are now no longer science fiction. Whether it's a chatbot that replies like a friend, a playlist that seems to know your mood, or a game that reacts to your behavior, AI is edging into the messy, emotional space of young people's life. And that's where things get interesting, even a bit tricky. Because the moment technology starts to deal with feelings, it stops being just a tool and starts becoming part of how we experience ourselves and others.

Image generated using AI

This is especially true when AI begins to act like it "understands" emotions something called affective computing[1] or emotion AI. It picks up clues from how we speak, type, or behave and tries to guess how we're feeling. But feelings aren't simple things you can read off a face or a text message. They're shaped by culture, relationships, and context. This kind of stuff machines were never supposed to really get.

So when AI appears to "understand us emotionally", it risks flattening our experiences into neat little categories that might miss the point entirely. For a generation used to digital interactions, this raises questions that are as much technical as personal: How do you build trust with a system that acts human but isn't? And how do young people feel when their emotions are read, judged, or even manipulated by a tool built on complex mathematical models designed to guess the *best* response?

About this Youth Pulse Study

At a time when the gap between content consumption and creation is increasing[2], Youth Ki Awaaz (YKA) and Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC) conducted this Youth Pulse survey to gauge young people's usage of AI for emotional conversations, and what it means for youth mental health.

It was clear to us when we launched the Youth Pulse that AI has the potential to both offer personalised support and replace human relationships. We wanted to understand what is the perception around privacy when users are venting to AI? Are these tools really inclusive and helpful? What risks are young Indians cautious of while choosing to use AI? Needless to say that we found a serious gap between evidence and conversations on this subject. So, the first Youth Pulse, "Are You There, AI?" aimed to explore how youngsters are using AI for an array of emotional purposes to find emotional support and companionship.

With over 500 respondents participating in the Youth Pulse launch survey, we have gathered strong preliminary evidence to present our understanding of AI as the new confidant, the midnight therapist, and a mirror to loneliness among youth. Detailed note on methodology and demographic profile of respondents can be accessed in the Appendix at the end of this document.

Endnotes [1], [2] and [3] are referenced in detail on page 24.

Note to Readers:

To ensure that the survey results reflect the broader population better, we used a method called **raking**. This is a statistical adjustment technique where the data is weighted based on known characteristics of the population. We have used age, gender, state, and area type to make the sample more closely match population distributions across these demographic categories. This helps correct for any imbalances in who responded to the survey.

How to read these charts

In the chart, each dot shows the estimated mean percentage of people who gave a certain response, after applying these weights. The *error bars* around the dots represent the range within which the true percentage is likely to fall, based on the sample data. In statistical jargon, this is called the *confidence interval*. A wider error bar means more uncertainty in the estimate, because fewer people gave that response.

When reading the chart, focus on both the *position of the dot* (the estimate) and the *length of the error bar* (the uncertainty). If two estimates have overlapping error bars, it suggests their difference may not be statistically significant. The combination of weighted mean estimates and error bars gives a more reliable sense of what the survey tells us, and how much confidence we can have in those findings.

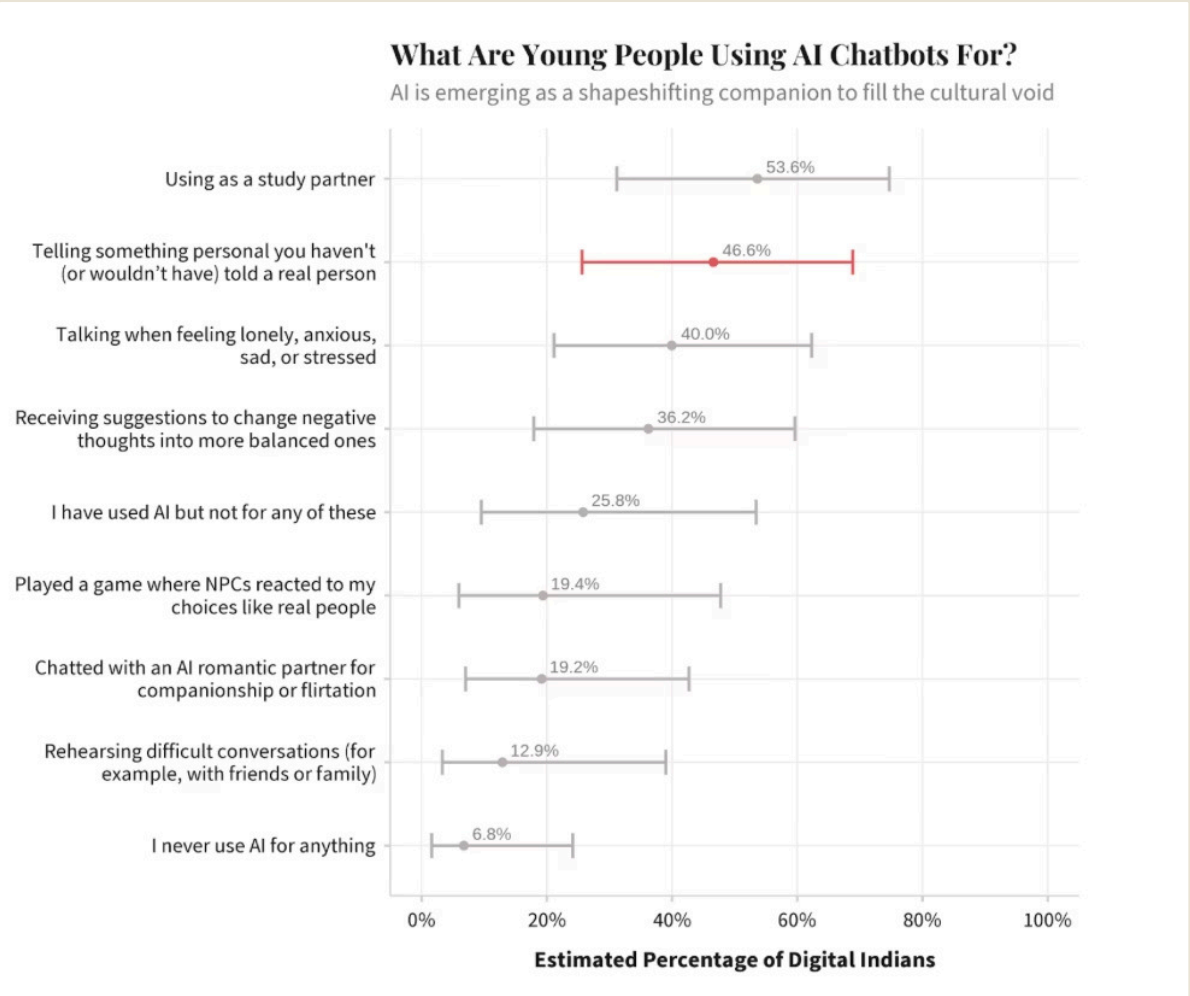

Figure 1: Young Indians primarily use AI chatbots as study partners, but nearly half of the young digital Indians confide personal thoughts they wouldn't share with real people.

2. So, how prevalent is the use of AI for emotional purposes among Indian Youth?

When it comes to emotional uses of AI, the numbers suggest this isn't some niche phenomenon; it's already mainstream. Our estimates suggest that more than half of young digital Indians have turned to AI as a study partner, and nearly four in ten have shared something personal with a chatbot that they might not have told another person. Talking to AI during moments of loneliness, anxiety, or stress is just as common, with a third also using it for suggestions to shift their negative thoughts. We can no longer treat these usage patterns as experimental one-offs. They should be taken as signals of how AI is *quietly* becoming part of how young people cope, vent, or make sense of their feelings.

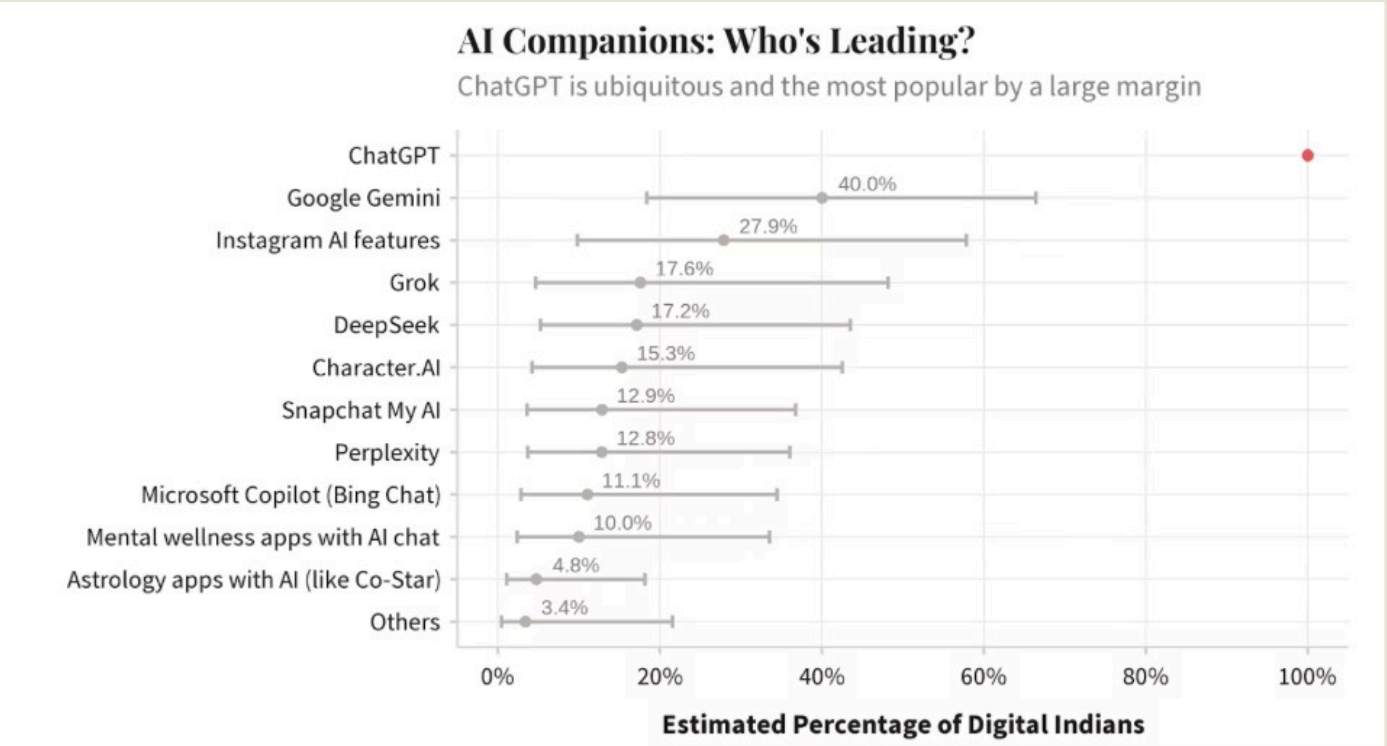

Figure 2: ChatGPT dominates the AI companion market with near-universal recognition, significantly outpacing all other tools

At the same time, emotional use of AI isn't limited to advice or conversation. Some young people use AI-enabled games with responsive characters, rehearse tough conversations with AI, or even chat with AI romantic partners. While these numbers are lower — mean estimates are in the range of 13% to 16% — they still signal a significant shift in how AI is entering intimate zones of life. Only a small fraction, around 7%, say they don't use AI at all for the purposes listed in the survey. What this adds up to is a landscape where emotional interaction with AI goes beyond a fringe behavior to become a regular feature of daily life for many young Indians. We are left to ponder over what it would mean to relate, express, and feel in such an increasingly AI-shaped world.

While many AI tools are part of this emotional landscape, one stands far ahead of the rest. ChatGPT dominates as the go-to companion for emotional conversations, with every other program trailing at less than half its usage. From mainstream platforms like Google Gemini and Instagram AI to niche ones like Character.AI or Snapchat My AI, the spread is wide but the leader is clear. How fast this single tool has become deeply integrated in India's digital life!

2.1 Comparing AI use by different demographic groups

Next, we turn to understand the use for these purposes in more detail by dissecting it across age, gender, area type, and occupation.

Gender Patterns

The ways young men and women turn to AI for support reveal distinct patterns. Among male respondents (169), AI use shows a strong academic focus. About 71% use AI as a study partner, while emotional engagement remains limited - only 25% turn to AI when feeling anxious or stressed, and 34% share personal secrets. Around 30% report using AI but not for any emotional purposes, suggesting functional rather than emotional adoption.

Female respondents (290) display markedly different patterns. While academic use is lower at 46%, emotional engagement is substantially higher across all categories. About 46% use AI during anxious or lonely moments, 52% share personal thoughts they wouldn't tell others, and 43% seek help rebalancing negative thoughts. Only 37% use AI purely for non-emotional purposes.

71%

Male respondents using AI as study partner

52%

Female respondents share personal thoughts with AI

22%

Female respondents using AI romantic partners

vs. virtually zero among males

The most striking gender difference appears in romantic AI use - 22% of female respondents report using AI romantic partners compared to virtually zero among males. Female respondents also show higher rates for rehearsing difficult conversations (15% vs 6%) and seeking emotional support across all measured categories. These patterns suggest gendered comfort levels with digital vulnerability. While men primarily approach AI as an academic tool, women more readily explore its emotional dimensions, using AI for intimate disclosure, emotional processing, and companionship. This could reflect different social permissions around emotional expression or varying pressures in managing relationships and inner lives[3].

Comparing across age groups

Teenage users (13-18) show the highest engagement with AI across all emotional categories, with study support dominating their usage. Among 16-18 year olds, every measured category, from sharing personal secrets to managing lonely moments, shows substantial adoption. This age group appears most comfortable integrating AI into their emotional routines.

Teenagers (13-18)

Highest engagement across all emotional categories, with study support dominating usage. Most comfortable integrating AI into emotional routines.

Young Adults (19-25)

More selective patterns. Maintain high usage for sharing personal thoughts (51%) and academic support (47%), but overall engagement drops compared to teenagers.

Adults (26-30)

Interesting reversal. Usage concentrates on cognitive tasks like thought rebalancing (80%) and study support (68%), while emotional sharing drops dramatically to 24%.

Young adults (19-25) display more selective patterns. While they maintain high usage for sharing personal thoughts (51%) and academic support (47%), their overall engagement drops compared to teenagers (about 90% while among 19-25 it is 73%).They seem to approach AI with more specific purposes rather than broad experimentation.

The 26-30 age group shows an interesting reversal. Their usage concentrates heavily on cognitive tasks like thought rebalancing (80%) and study support (68%), while emotional sharing drops dramatically. Only 24% turn to AI during anxious moments, suggesting older users treat AI more as a practical tool than an emotional outlet.

These patterns indicate that AI emotional use is most intensely concentrated among teenagers, who are likely to be early, enthusiastic adopters of this technology and potentially most vulnerable to its impacts. This high adoption among young teenagers does require immediate attention from parents, educators, mental health professionals, and policymakers to ensure appropriate safeguards and support systems are in place as this new form of digital companionship becomes normalized in their daily lives.

Do urban and rural India differ on this too?

Looking at usage rates within each area type reveals surprising patterns. In metros (306 respondents), about 40% report using AI but not for any emotional purposes listed, suggesting metro youth primarily use AI for work or information rather than emotional support. When they do use it emotionally, academic support leads at 33%.

Other major cities (87 respondents) show similar usage at 30%, but those who do engage emotionally show more intensive patterns - 38% turn to AI during lonely moments and 34% share personal secrets.

Small cities and towns (60 respondents) display the highest emotional engagement rates. Only about 15-20% use AI without emotional purposes. The rest show strong adoption across all emotional categories: 42% use it when feeling low, 45% for cognitive rebalancing, and 43% share things they wouldn't tell others.

Image generated using AI

> **Small cities and towns display the highest emotional engagement with AI - 43% share things they wouldn't tell others**

This counter-intuitive pattern suggests emotional AI use inversely correlates with urban character. Metro youth have AI access but use it functionally, while small city youth embrace AI's emotional capabilities more fully. Could it be indicative of fewer support options and greater social constraints in small town India?

Education and Work Status Patterns

School Students (142)

Highest emotional AI engagement across all categories:

- 88% use AI when feeling anxious or stressed
- 63% share personal secrets
- Only 31% report using AI for non-emotional purposes

Undergraduate Students (88)

High but more selective emotional use:

- 79% share personal thoughts with AI
- 68% seek support during difficult times
- Academic use remains strong at 69%

Postgraduate Students (49)

Dramatic shift in usage patterns:

- 71% share personal information with AI
- Usage for anxiety/stress drops to near zero
- 29% use AI only for non-emotional tasks

Working Professionals (111)

Starkest contrast in usage:

- About 2/3 use AI exclusively for non-emotional purposes
- Only 12% share personal thoughts
- Minimal emotional engagement overall

These patterns indicate that AI emotional use is most intensely concentrated among teenagers, who are likely to be early, enthusiastic adopters of this technology and potentially most vulnerable to its impacts. This high adoption among young teenagers does require immediate attention from parents, educators, mental health professionals, and policymakers to ensure appropriate safeguards and support systems are in place as this new form of digital companionship becomes normalized in their daily lives.

2.2 What motivates India's youth to use AI for emotional conversations?

Why do young people in India turn to AI when they are feeling low or need to open up? The answers tell a story of both practical needs and emotional gaps. Half of them value AI for the quality of advice it gives. Almost as many say they appreciate that AI does not judge. The round-the-clock availability matters to 42%, and 38% find comfort in the privacy it offers. Nearly 29% admit they simply wanted to experiment with this new form of support, while 18% turn to AI to avoid burdening others with their problems. Taken together, this mix of reasons points to how AI has started filling everyday emotional needs; not because it is perfect, but because it is available, non-judgmental, and offers a kind of perceived "low-risk" support.

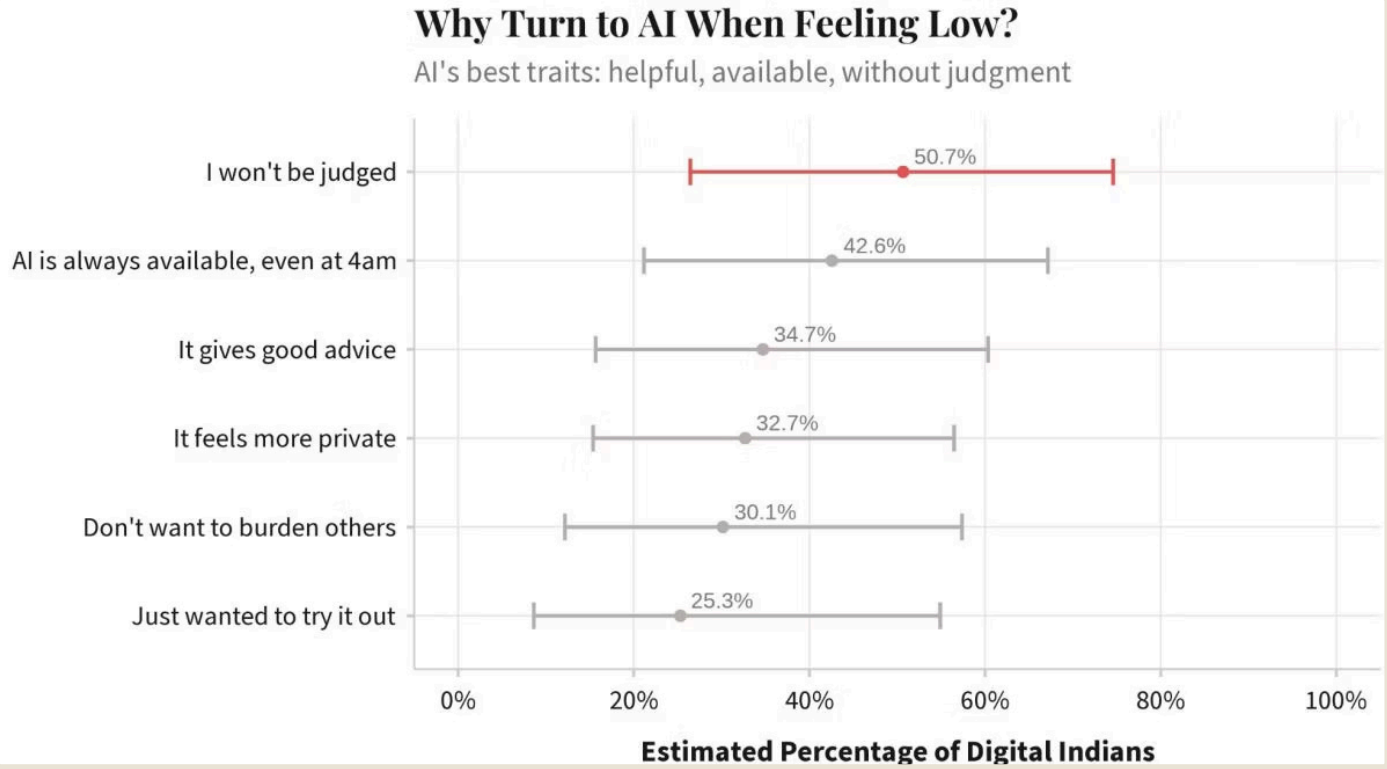

Figure 3: Non-judgmental interaction drives AI emotional support adoption, with 50.7% of users valuing the absence of criticism over other AI benefits

2.3 What time do people usually talk to AI for emotional conversations?

The when and how of these conversations confirms that AI is definitely a late-night fallback for moments of crisis. Surely, most interactions still happen during the day or evening but a sizable chunk of conversations happen late at night, at times when human support might be harder to reach. Most emotional AI use happens during regular daytime hours (49%) and evenings (43%). These interactions have become normalized parts of daily routines. Only 3% use AI for emotional support in the morning, indicating these conversations cluster around times when human support networks might be less accessible or when people have more privacy.

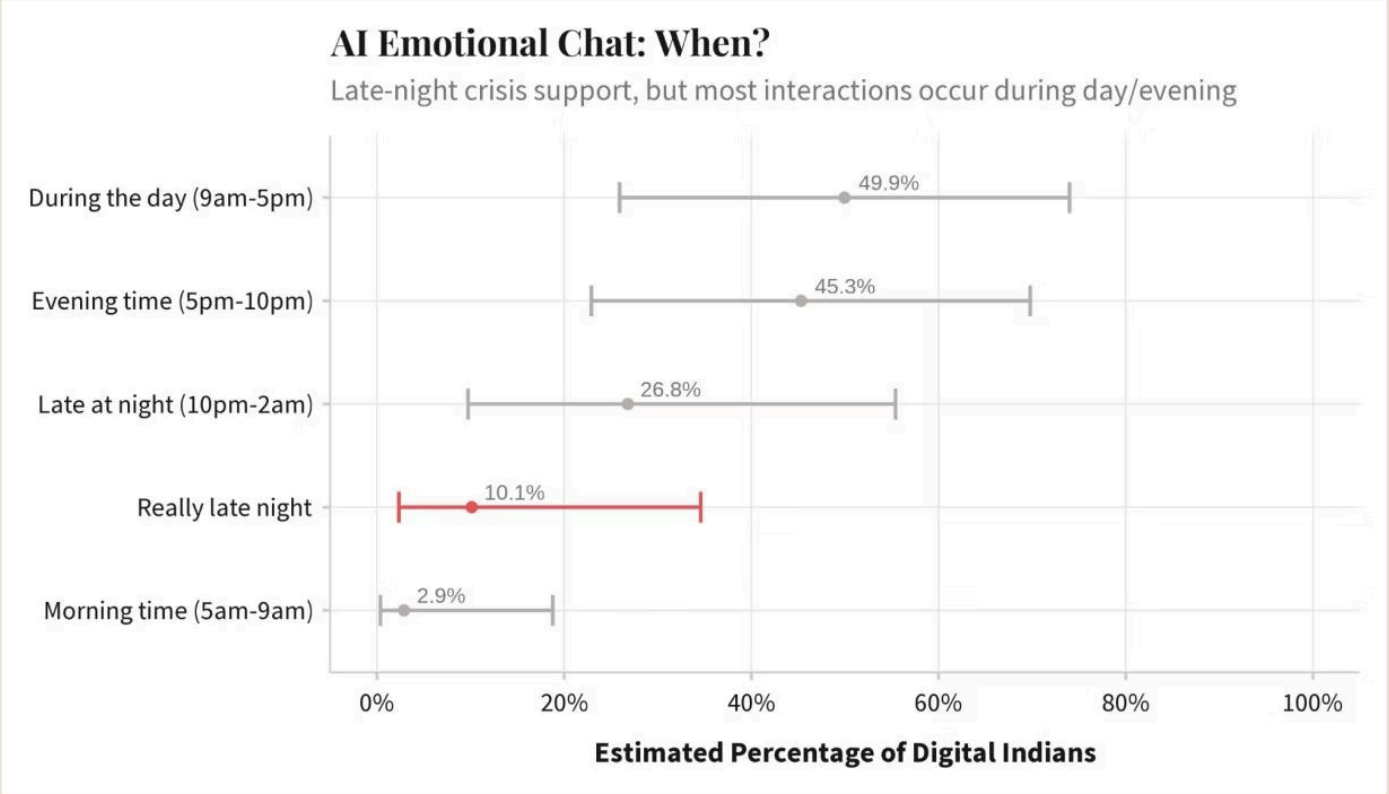

Figure 4: AI emotional conversations concentrate during standard hours, peaking at 49.9% during daytime, though notable late-night usage was at 10.1%.

3. AI, Fill in the Gap

Young Indians have started using AI as a specific kind of emotional outlet, for particular thoughts and feelings that don't have an obvious place to go. This section looks at how often this happens, what kinds of personal things young people share with AI, and whether they think AI actually understands them. It examines what changes after these AI conversations. Do people become more or less likely to talk to their friends and family?

3.1 How often do young people reach out to AI?

As for how often young people use AI when they are emotionally low, the pattern is mixed. The frequency data shows that while AI emotional support has entered mainstream use, it remains episodic rather than habitual for most users. About 62% report never using AI when feeling emotionally low or stressed, but among those who do, the pattern varies: 19% turn to AI often, 16% sometimes, and only 3% rarely. This suggests that once people cross the threshold of trying AI for emotional support, they tend to find enough value to return, treating AI as a sounding board for things that feel too heavy, risky, or complicated to share with another person.

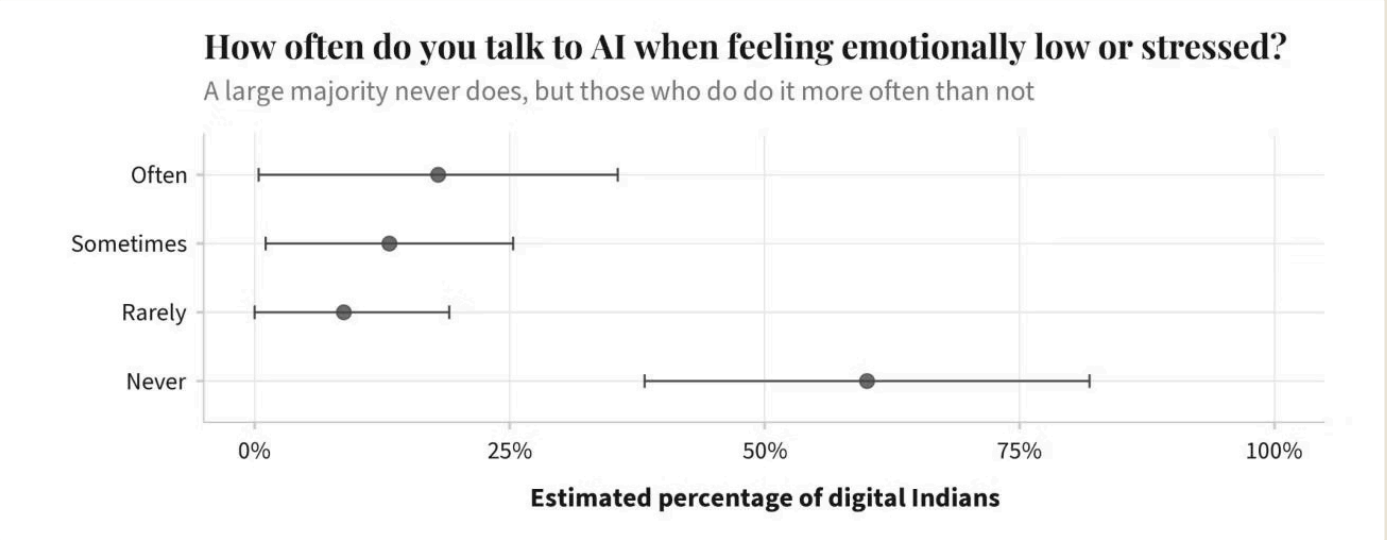

Figure 5: Most young digital Indians avoid AI for emotional support entirely, though regular users demonstrate consistent engagement patterns

3.2 How often do you tell AI something personal, things you haven't or wouldn't have told anyone else?

Personal disclosure to AI follows a similar pattern of selective but meaningful use. When it comes to sharing thoughts they wouldn't tell another person, even though AI is not seen as perfect at understanding emotions, most users find it good enough: 49% do this sometimes, 40% often, 11% rarely, and virtually none report never doing it once they've started. This high rate of intimate disclosure suggests AI has carved out a unique space in young people's emotional lives - not as a replacement for human connection but as a parallel confidant for thoughts that feel too risky, shameful, or complicated for human ears.

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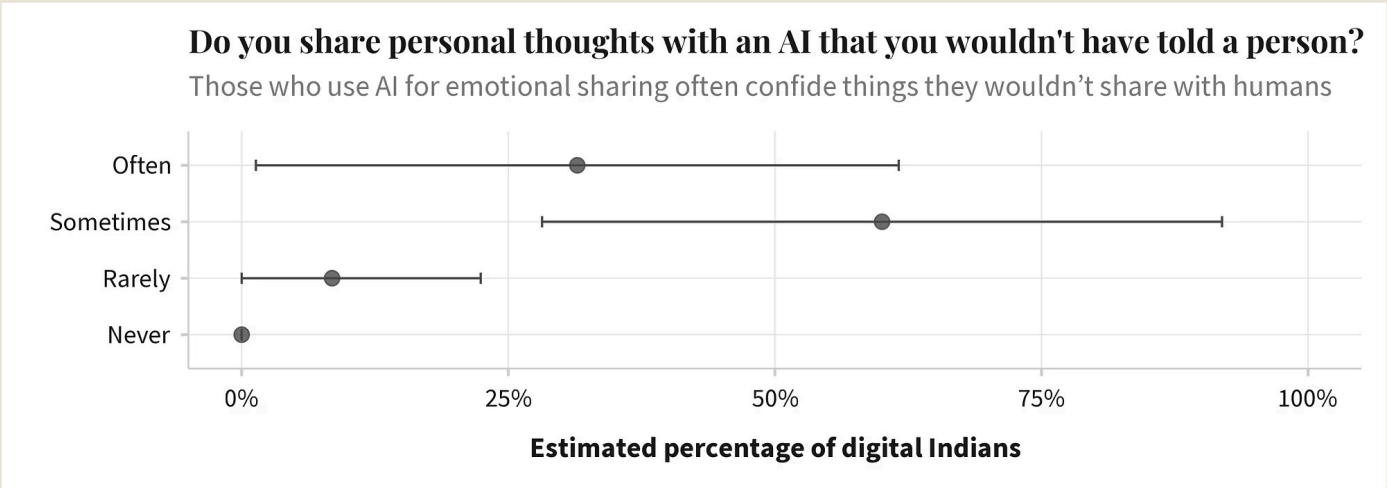


Figure 6: Social isolation fears dominate AI risk perceptions at 66.7%, while dependency concerns affect 48.5% of young Digital Indians despite continued usage.

3.3 How accurately do you feel an AI companion can understand your emotions when you share personal feelings?

A small share sees AI as low on accuracy, but many rate it as somewhat or mostly accurate, and some even see it as completely getting them. Only 5% believe AI has low accuracy in understanding their emotions, while 24% rate it as somewhat accurate, 43% as mostly accurate, and 28% as completely accurate. This distribution suggests most users find AI sufficiently capable of grasping their emotional states to make the interaction worthwhile.

The picture is similar when it comes to usefulness. Very few find AI unhelpful, and most say it is at least moderately helpful, if not a game-changer.

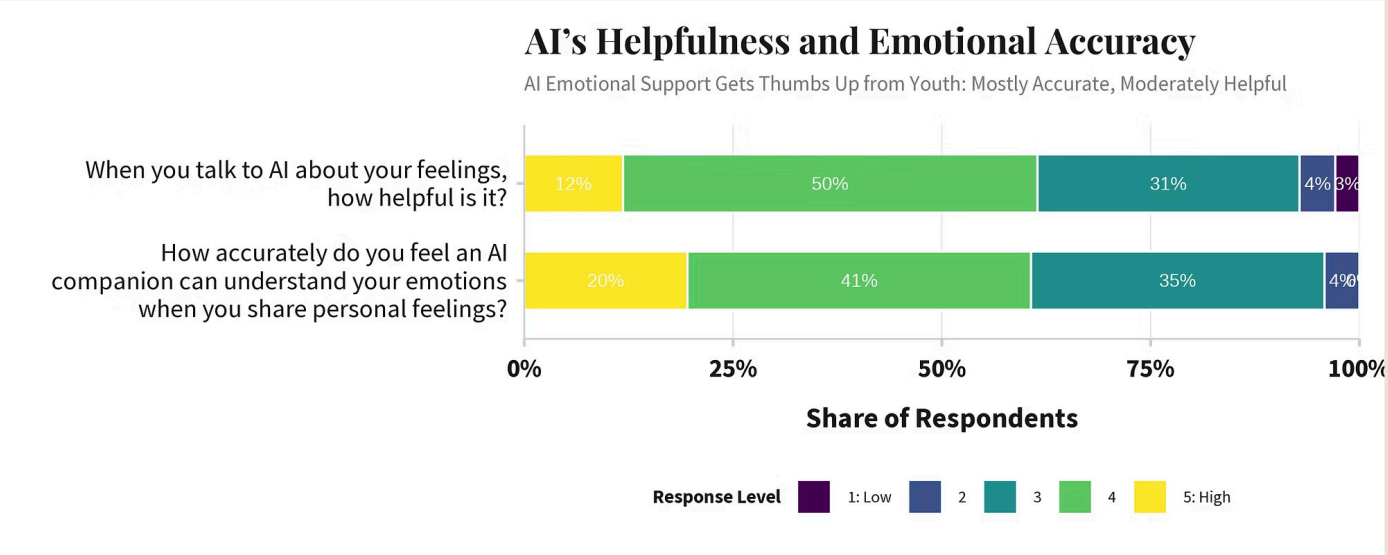


Figure 7: AI emotional support receives positive user ratings, with 50% finding it moderately helpful and 41% rating AI's emotional understanding as reasonably accurate.

3.4 How helpful did you feel about AI after using it for emotional support?

The helpfulness ratings tell a story of qualified success. Only 3% find AI unhelpful for emotional support, with 4% rating it slightly helpful. The bulk of users cluster in the middle to high range: 38% find it moderately helpful, 39% quite helpful, and 15% very helpful. These numbers suggest AI delivers value for emotional support, though perhaps not transformative results for most users. The worry, however, comes in when you look at how this affects real-world relationships.

3.5 Were you more/less likely to talk to relatives/friends after using AI?

After using AI for emotional support, 42% report being less likely to talk to relatives or friends, 41% see no change, and only 17% become more likely to seek human connection.

After using AI for emotional support, users' likelihood of talking to humans shows concerning patterns. A significant number of users feel less inclined to reach out to friends or family after using AI for emotional support. About 42% report being less likely to talk to relatives or friends, 41% see no change, and only 17% become more likely to seek human connection. This suggests, at least for a significant section of youth, **AI might be creating a substitution effect rather than serving as a bridge to human support, though the high "no change" percentage indicates many users maintain separate tracks for AI and human emotional support.**

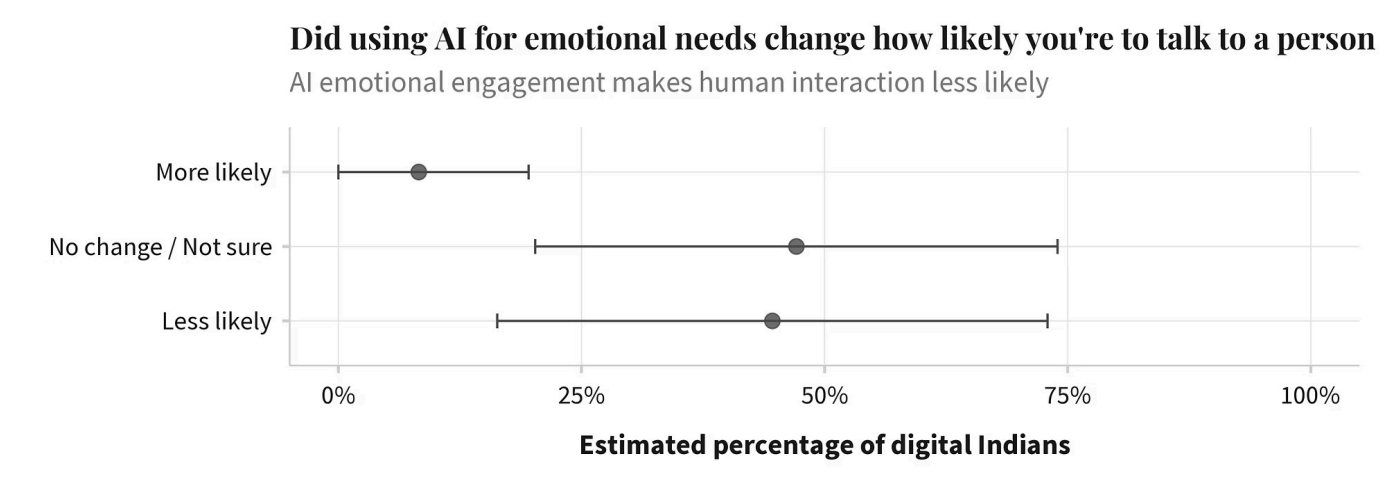


Figure 8: AI emotional engagement shows mixed impact on human interaction, with roughly half reporting reduced likelihood to talk with people after using AI support.

4. Risks and Caution

4.1 Why some people do not use AI for emotional purposes

Among non-users, privacy concerns dominate as the primary barrier (73%), followed by skepticism about AI's ability to truly understand human emotions (48%). Lack of awareness remains significant at 36%, while 32% worry about developing dependence. About 30% simply prefer human interaction, and 13% don't feel the need for any additional emotional support. These reasons show that even with all its appeal, AI carries a fair bit of baggage, both in terms of data security and in the deeper question of whether it can ever really replace human understanding.

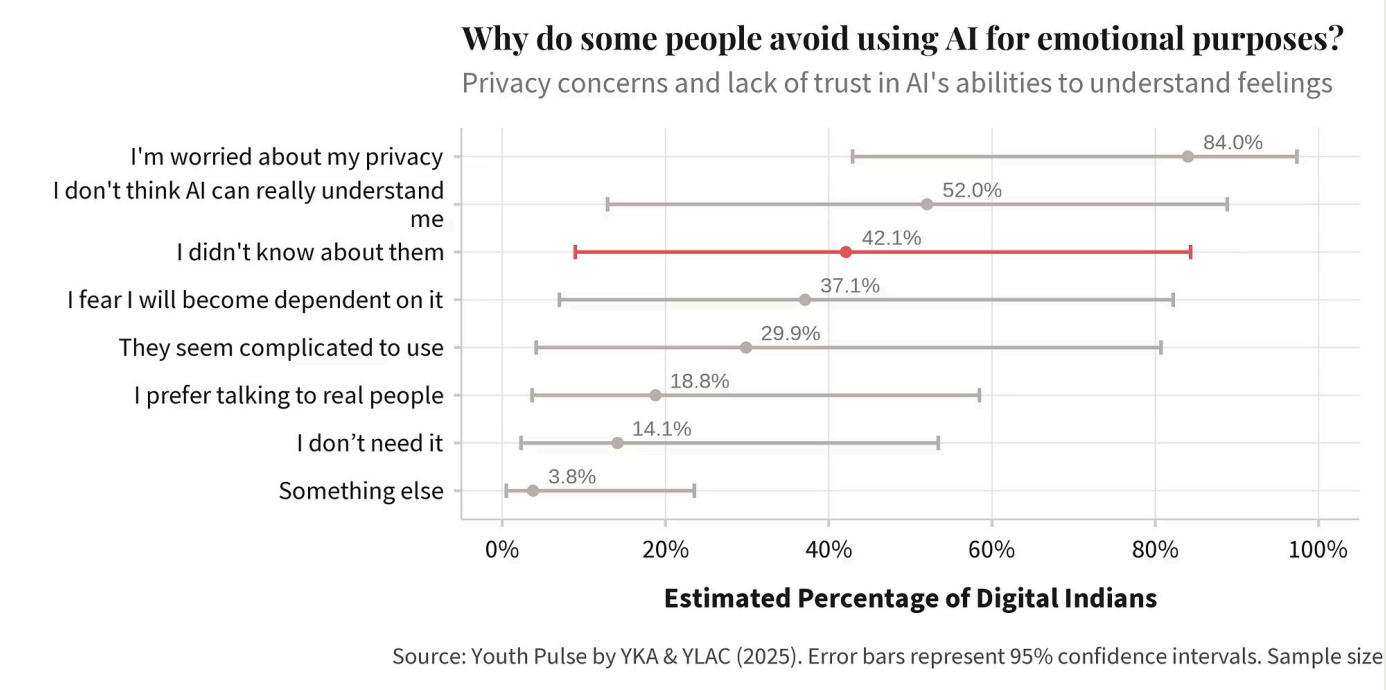
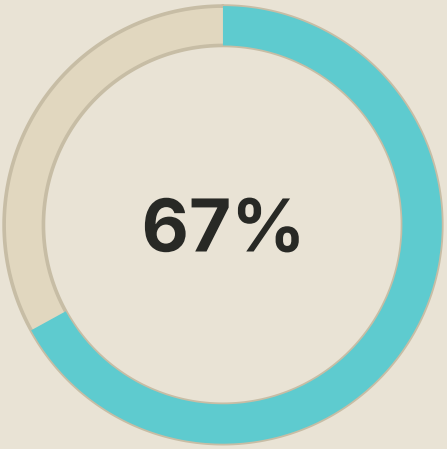


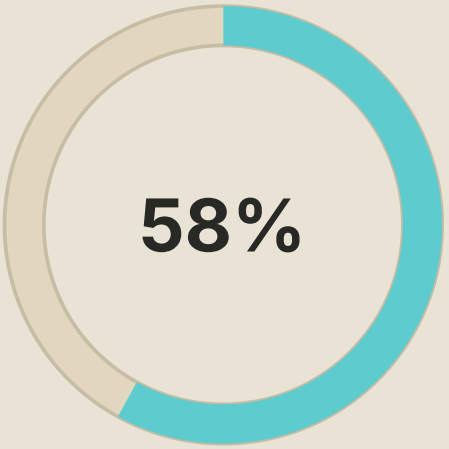
Figure 9: Privacy anxiety overwhelmingly deters AI emotional engagement, with 84.0% citing data concerns and 42.1% lacking awareness of available tools.

4.2 What worries you when you use AI for emotional support?



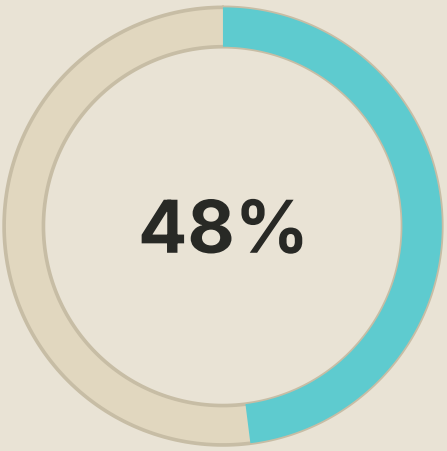
Social Isolation

Users recognize the potential for AI to deepen rather than alleviate disconnection



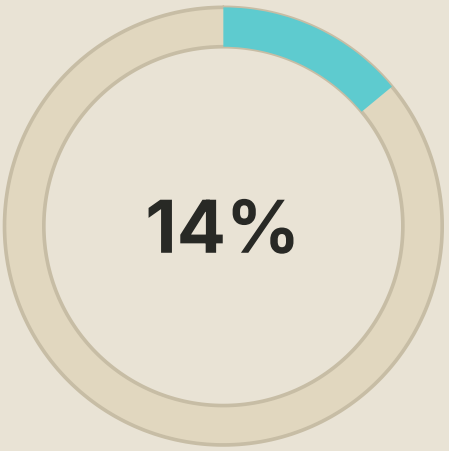
Privacy Concerns

Persistent unease about data security when sharing vulnerable moments



Dependency

Nearly half worry about becoming too dependent on AI for emotional support



Harmful Advice

Some fear receiving potentially damaging guidance from AI

For those who do use AI in emotional situations, risks remain a constant worry. Social isolation tops the worry list at 67%, suggesting users recognize the potential for AI to deepen rather than alleviate disconnection. Privacy concerns persist even among users (58%), indicating that sharing vulnerable moments with AI creates lasting unease about data security. Nearly half (48%) worry about becoming too dependent on AI, while 14% fear receiving harmful advice. Only 8% see no risks at all, showing that most users engage with AI support despite, not because of, a lack of concerns about its impact on their emotional and social wellbeing. So even though AI has made its way into personal and emotional spaces, most young people seem to approach it with their eyes open, with an awareness of both its promise and its pitfalls.

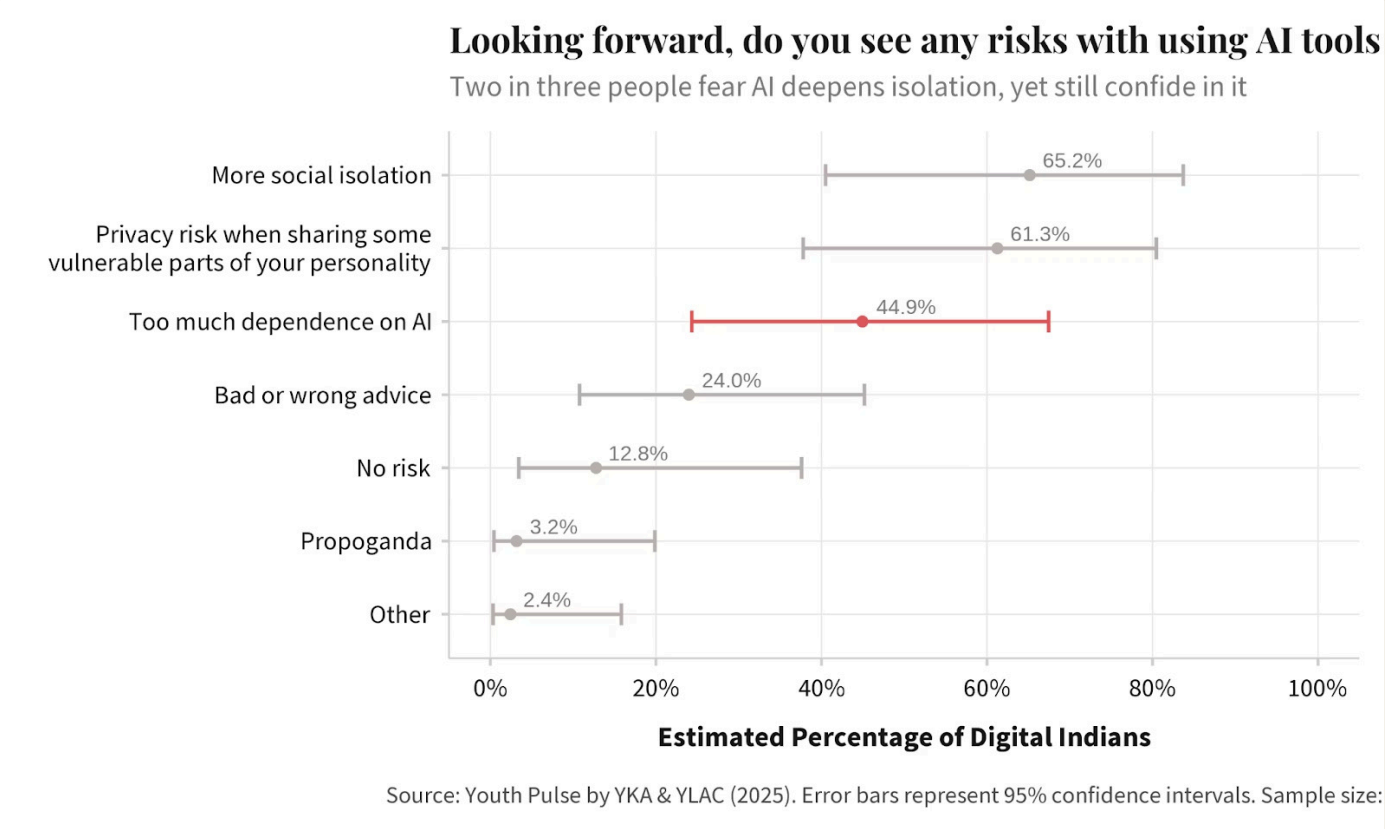


Figure 10: Social isolation anxiety persists at 65.2% despite AI adoption, reflecting ongoing concerns about technology's impact on human connection; Dependency risks at 44.9%.

5. Is AI Young India's Accidental Mental Health Infrastructure?

The data reveals AI functioning as an unplanned mental health safety net for young Indians navigating a system with one counselor per 100,000 people. With 40% young digital Indians estimated to be regularly sharing with AI what they'd never tell humans, and 38% of them finding it more helpful than moderately, we're witnessing the emergence of a parallel support system born from necessity rather than design.

This does not strongly suggest AI being therapeutic, but definitely confirms that all-round availability is the key feature that makes AI so dependable. Young Indians use it to process the emotional overflow their social structures can't accommodate: career anxieties that clash with family expectations, relationship doubts that feel culturally transgressive, identity questions that have no safe space in their immediate circles.

The late-night usage patterns and high rates of intimate disclosure point to AI filling the need of a therapist they can't afford, the non-judgmental friends, parents, elders, relatives they can't find.

The finding that 42% become less likely to seek human support afterward suggests AI might be creating emotional cul-de-sacs rather than bridges to care. Yet for a generation facing academic pressure, rapid social change, and limited mental health resources, AI has become the de facto first responder. The question now is whether we should and can formalize this accidental infrastructure, and integrate it into mental healthcare policy and planning. In the absence of that, we would continue letting young people navigate their emotional lives through ChatGPT's text box.

> "With 40% young digital Indians estimated to be regularly sharing with AI what they'd never tell humans, we're witnessing the emergence of a parallel support system born from necessity rather than design."

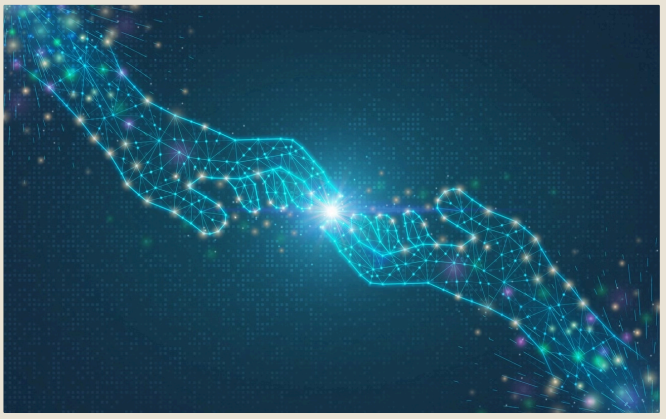


Image generated using AI

6. And, the verdict: Is AI Replacing Humans for Emotional and Mental Health Needs in India?

This Youth Pulse study finds that AI is unlikely to replace the need and importance of human emotional support. It is filling gaps that always existed but went unaddressed. Young Indians are creating a new emotional geography where AI handles the thoughts too risky for family WhatsApp groups and too embarrassing for friends. Now, this isn't about choosing machines over people. It's about having somewhere to put feelings that don't fit anywhere else.

> **The real shift is that emotional support no longer** *waits for* **human presence.**

AI has become the practice ground for difficult conversations, the judgment-free zone for processing shame, and the always-available ear for thoughts still taking shape. Whether this makes us more or less connected depends on what we do with the emotional clarity AI helps us find. However, policymakers, product companies and adults-in-charge in young people's lives need to take note and start thinking about the guardrails around safe usage of AI. Young people are waiting for no one, and AI is always there to lend them an ear. The question is to the adults-in-charge, are you here?

End notes

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3. These findings contrast with studies from other social contexts, where male usage of AI romantic companions significantly exceeds female participation. Research from Brigham Young University found that 31% of young adult men versus 23% of young adult women have engaged with AI romantic partners, with men comprising the majority of paying users in markets that predominantly target male consumers, particularly for sexual content (Harvard Kennedy School, 2024). The global "AI girlfriend" market shows over 144,000 monthly searches, with usage spanning from teenagers to older men seeking companionship alternatives (Forbes, 2024).

Appendix

Appendix-1: Note on Methodology

The Youth Pulse web survey "Are You There, AI?" collected responses from 506 participants across India in June 2025, employing a digital-first approach to understand how young Indians interact with AI for emotional support. The survey was distributed through social media channels, educational networks, and youth organizations to capture diverse perspectives from the target demographic of 13-35 year olds.

The survey instrument included multiple-choice questions, Likert-type questions, and a couple of open-ended responses, designed to capture both behavioral patterns and attitudinal dimensions of AI use for emotional support. Questions progressed from AI use for various purposes to specific emotional support scenarios, privacy concerns, and impact on human relationships. Response options were crafted based on preliminary qualitative research and conversations with young AI users.

To enhance representativeness of this opt-in sample, we employed raking (iterative proportional fitting), a statistical weighting technique that adjusts the sample to match known population characteristics. The data was weighted across four key dimensions: age, gender, state, and area type (metro/urban/rural), using the most recent census projections. This adjustment helps correct for sampling biases inherent in digital surveys, where certain groups may be over or underrepresented.

Limitations

However, important limitations must be acknowledged. The sample size of 506, while substantial for exploratory research, limits the precision of estimates for smaller subgroups. Self-selection bias may mean respondents are more tech-aware or AI-curious than the general youth population. Additionally, self-reported data on emotional topics may be subject to social desirability bias, even in anonymous surveys. These findings should therefore be interpreted as indicative patterns rather than definitive measurements. For what it is worth, they offer preliminary insights into emerging trends but may not capture the full spectrum of youth experiences with AI across India's diverse contexts. We welcome inquiries about detailed methodology and are happy to share additional technical documentation with interested researchers and organizations.

Appendix-2: Participant Profile

Indicator	Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Demographics Age	13-15	43	8.5
	16-18	135	26.7
	19-25	168	33.2
	26-30	76	15
	31-35	47	9.3
	Above 35	5	1
	NA	32	6.3
Gender	Boy/Man	169	33.4
	Girl/Woman	290	57.3
	Non-binary/Transgender	15	3
	NA	32	6.3
Professional Occupation	In school (Class 9-12)	142	28.1
	Working full-time	111	21.9
	In college/university (undergraduate)	88	17.4
	In college/university (postgraduate)	49	9.7
	Looking for work	21	4.2
	Self-employed/Freelancing	20	4
	Preparing for competitive exams (NEET, JEE, UPSC, etc.)	16	3.2
	Working part-time	13	2.6
	Taking a gap year	5	1
	In vocational/technical training (Polytechnic, ITI, etc.)	3	0.6
	Homemaker	1	0.2

Appendix-2: Participant Profile

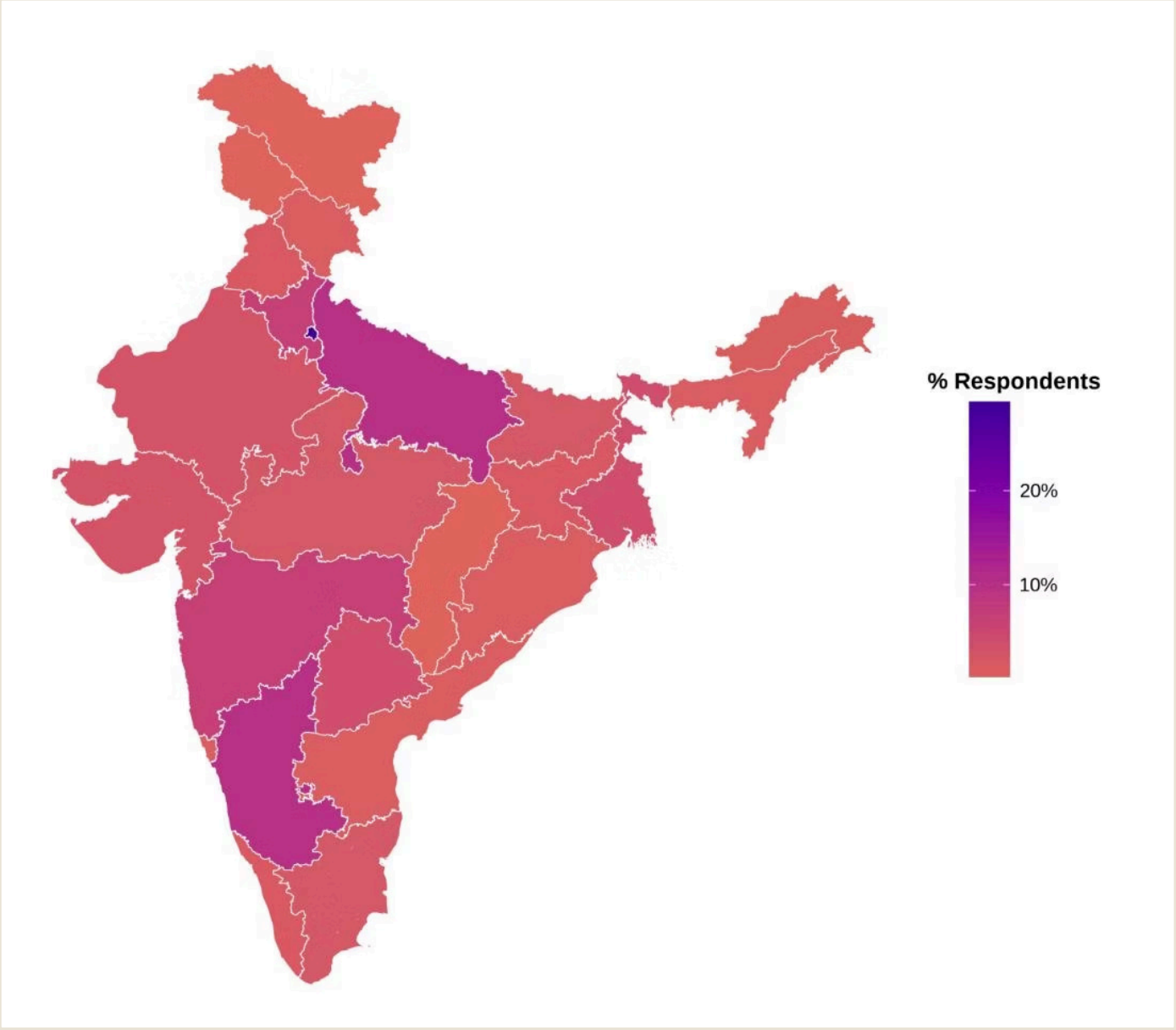
Indicator	Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Geographic Area	Metro cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, etc.)	306	60.5
	Other major city	87	17.2
	Rural area/village	21	4.2
	Small city/town	60	11.9
	NA	32	6.3

The Youth Pulse survey captured responses from 506 participants across India, with a predominantly young demographic (59.9% aged 16-25 years) and majority of respondents identifying as 'girl/woman' (57.3%). The sample includes diverse educational and professional backgrounds, with students comprising the largest group (45.5% in school or college), followed by working professionals (24.5%).

Geographically, respondents were concentrated in urban areas, with 60.5% from metro cities and Delhi representing the highest state participation (29.4%).

Regional Representation

The sample spans **28 major states**, with strong representation from key northern and southern regions including Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Haryana, and Maharashtra. This represents the broad cross-section of India's youth and young adult population very well.



About Youth Pulse

Youth Pulse is a recurring, anonymous survey that captures the views, experiences, and aspirations of young Indians. In a country where over half the population is under 30, young people shape culture, power change, and challenge outdated norms. Yet, their voices often remain absent from policy debates and public discourse. A joint initiative of **Youth Ki Awaaz** and **Young Leaders for Active Citizenship**, Youth Pulse aims to bridge this gap by generating timely insights on issues that matter to young people. By amplifying their perspectives, the project seeks to inform policymakers, corporations, political actors, civil society, and media, ensuring that India's youth are heard in the conversations shaping the country's future. In a fast-changing, post-pandemic, AI-affected world, Youth Pulse provides a critical platform for registering youth expression and helping institutions listen better for building a more inclusive society.

Image generated using AI

About Youth Ki Awaaz

Youth Ki Awaaz (YKA) is India's largest citizen-led media and civic participation platform, enabling over 200,000 young people every month to share stories, take polls, and drive change. Since 2008, YKA has built an infrastructure for participation around five pillars: listening, analyzing, activating, measuring, and enabling. We capture authentic youth voices through surveys, submissions, and campaigns, turn them into actionable insights, and mobilize young people through fellowships and grassroots action. Partnering with brands and nonprofits, YKA bridges information, access, and action, shaping narratives from net zero to menstrual health.

About Young Leaders For Active Citizenship

Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC) aims to increase the participation of young people in the policymaking process and build their capacity to lead change. Our interventions are designed to equip citizens with a better understanding of the society they live in and the challenges that it confronts. The aim is to help young people broaden their perspective, think critically about their socio-political construct, tap their leadership potential and acquire skills to create long lasting impact.